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United States Patent [19]

Ullrich et al.

[11] Patent Number:

5,851,999

[45] Date of Patent:

Dec. 22, 1998

[54] FLK-1 IS A RECEPTOR FOR VASCULAR ENDOTHELIAL GROWTH FACTOR

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[21] Appl. No.: 443,861

[22] Filed: May 22, 1995

Related U.S. Application Data

[60] Division of Ser. No. 193,829, Feb. 9, 1994, which is a continuation-in-part of Ser. No. 38,596, Mar. 26, 1993, abandoned, which is a continuation-in-part of Ser. No. 975,750, Nov. 13, 1992, abandoned.

[51] **Int. Cl.**⁶ **A61K 48/00**; C12N 5/00; C12N 15/00

435/172.3, 320.1, 252–3, 361, 375; 424/93.2; 935/57, 70, 71, 32

[56] Refere

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[57]

ABSTRACT

The present invention relates to the use of ligands for the FLK-1 receptor for the modulation of angiogenesis and vasculogenesis. The invention is based, in part, on the demonstration that Flk-1 tyrosine kinase receptor expression is associated with endothelial cells and the identification of vascular endothelial growth factor (VEGF) as the high affinity ligand of Flk-1. These results indicate a major role for Flk-1 in the signaling system during vasculogenesis and angiogenesis. Engineering of host cells that express Flk-1 and the uses of expressed Flk-1 to evaluate and screen for drugs and analogs of VEGF involved in Flk-1 modulation by either agonist or antagonist activities is described. The invention also relates to the use of FLK-1 ligands, including VEGF agonists and antagonists, in the treatment of disorders, including cancer, by modulating vasculogenesis and angiogenesis.

32 Claims, 25 Drawing Sheets